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TELEGRAM

March 22, 2003

To: No Action Addressee
Action: Unknown
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 1365 - UNKNOWN)
TAGS: ASEC, AMGT, PTER, PREL, EAID, PGOV
Captions: None
Subject: TFIZ01 (EAC): ABU DHABI SITREP NO. 3, MARCH 22
Ref: None

S E C R E T ABU DHABI 01365

SIPDIS
CXABU:
ACTION: POL
INFO: ADM RSO AMB DCM P/M ECON

DISSEMINATION: POL
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: DCM: RALBRIGHT
DRAFTED: ECON:CCRUMPLER
CLEARED: ECON:TWILLIAMS POL:STWILLIAMS RS:JROONEY PAO:KVANDEVATE

VZCZCADI430
OO RUEHC RUCNRAQ RUEKJCS RUMICEA RUEKJCS RUEHDE
DE RUEHAD #1365/01 0811205
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O 221205Z MAR 03
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8983
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUMICEA/USCINCCENT INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI PRIORITY 2907

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 001365

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STATE FOR IRAQ TASK FORCE, ALSO NEA/ARP, NEA/EX,
CA/OCS/NEASA, DS/DSS/ITA, DS/IP/NEA, DSERCC, AND M

E.O. 12958: DECL 03/21/13
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [AMGT](#) [KHLs](#) [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [PGOV](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: TFIZ01 (EAC): ABU DHABI SITREP NO. 3, MARCH 22

REF: A) ABU DHABI 1350 B) DUBAI 1149 C) ABU DHABI 1352
D) ABU DHABI 1359

1. (U) Classified by DCM Richard A. Albright, for reasons
1.5 (B) and (D).

General Overview

¶2. (U) COM convened Abu Dhabi's Iraq Task Force/core Emergency Action Committee (EAC) at 1000 local time, 3/22.

¶3. (C) Embassy Abu Dhabi is open 3/22 with full staffing, but with no visa or public services. FCS and the USGS office in Al Ain are closed completely due to their location outside of the Embassy compound. In light of the calm local reaction, however, Task Force/EAC members decided that the Embassy would open 3/23 as normal, including the FCS and USGS satellite offices.

¶4. (C) The Ambassador noted that UAE First Lady Shaykha Fatima had called this morning to express her condolences over the loss of six U.S. Marines killed in action since the onset of hostilities in Iraq.

Consular Issues

¶5. (U) The Consular Section is closed to visa applicants on 3/22, and is open for American Citizen Services only. The Consular Section usually is closed to visa applicants on Sundays for administrative processing. The Task Force/EAC will determine at its next meeting whether to resume visa services on 3/24.

UAEG Actions/Statements

¶6. (U) ECON said that local weather conditions -- not the war -- had affected flights in and out of the UAE. Both Abu Dhabi and Dubai airports closed for part of Thursday night due to severe thunderstorms. The General Civil Aviation Authority confirmed to ECON that Kuwait Airlines had not moved its operations to Dubai or Sharjah, as previous news reports had indicated was likely, probably because Kuwait International Airport is still open for business.

¶7. (U) POL reported that the official Friday sermon from the Mohammed Bin Zayid Mosque in Abu Dhabi made no mention of Iraq, and focused on conciliation between Christians and Muslims. Friday sermons from other mosques around town also urged continued support for the Palestinians. Unlike other cities in the region, the Friday sermons in Abu Dhabi concluded without incident or public demonstrations. POL noted, however, that with the onset of the "shock and awe" campaign, we might see a more negative public reaction in the UAE. The Ambassador reminded Task Force/EAC members of the need to monitor local reaction to U.S. military actions.

Security

¶8. (C) A senior royal family member contacted the Ambassador on Friday morning to assure her that no anti-American demonstrations would take place in Abu Dhabi following the Friday sermon. RSO confirmed that Abu Dhabi police have received two requests for demonstrations -- neither was approved -- and security upgrades around the Embassy are complete.

¶9. (S/NF) ORCA and RSO were not aware of any new threats. ORCA advised that ref A-C threat reporting of planned Iraqi attacks using high-powered explosives and poison gas in the UAE had been recalled.

Local Media

¶10. (C) PAO confirmed that the raising of the American flag over the Iraqi town of Umm Qasr had dominated the headlines of local newspapers and was the focus of an

extremely negative editorial in the "Gulf News" English daily. She noted that local editorials were not positive; one Arabic editorial accused U.S. forces of attempting to "colonize" Iraq. In a reference to remarks by Under Secretary Marc Grossman at the Foreign Press Center on

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3/19, the number two headline on the front page of the Pan-Arab "Al-Khaleej" Arabic daily 3/22 read, "The U.S. wants a new government [of Iraq] which will recognize Israel." Deputy Secretary Armitage appeared on Abu Dhabi Television overnight, and the interview will be replayed throughout the day.

¶11. (C) PAO learned that her British counterpart also had received numerous phone calls from the UAE Information Ministry requesting immediate assistance to embed Abu Dhabi Television journalists, some of whom currently sit with Coalition supply units, into our front-line forces. UAE Information Minister Shaykh Abdulla also told the Ambassador that Abu Dhabi Television and Al-Jazeera reporters have been released from the Iraqi Information Ministry building, but many more journalists remain captive inside (ref D).

¶12. (U) Abu Dhabi Iraq Task Force/EAC will reconvene at 1000 local time, 3/23.

¶13. (U) Iraq Task Force/EAC members in attendance included AMB, DCM, RSO, DAO, P/M, POL, ECON, CONS, MSG, OBO, PAO, ADMIN, USLO, FCS, FBI.

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